



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 3, 2010  
**TO:** Near Southside Working Committee  
**FROM:** Christine Palmer, Planner  
**RE:** Near Southside Stakeholder Interview Summary

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The following is a summary of the Near Southside Stakeholder Interviews.

### Summary of Findings

- The stakeholders interviewed for the background research on the Near Southside Plan felt that while the Near Southside faces some challenges, it has numerous community assets to build upon.
- Older commercial corridors provide a more intimate environment however numerous buildings are suffering from neglect.
- Additional retail offerings are needed, most notably a neighborhood grocery store.
- Good location, 10 minutes to many attractions/destinations.
- There is a desire for more working class families, more homeowners.
- Visual appearance makes the area look worse than it is.
- Connectivity would be improved with additional sidewalks.

### Land Use

- Treasure long established businesses, Tee Jayes Restaurant, schools, churches, Nationwide Children's Hospital
- Too many gas stations, liquor stores, drive thrus, pawn shops, used appliance stores, check cashing
- All banks are on Lockbourne Avenue, need to locate them in additional areas
- Limit the amount of establishments with liquor licenses
- Redevelop the northeast corner of Lockbourne Road and Whittier Street – could be outdoor market (sell Christmas trees)
- Discourage drug paraphernalia stores
- In the R-2 districts homes that have been split into duplexes need to be put back to single family
- Need Laundromat, shopping and markets
- Livingston Avenue needs a grocery store, banks, clothing stores (Bexley and German Village residents would be customers), bodega
- Commercial on north side of Livingston near Alum Creek Drive should be highway oriented
- Light industry focus for Alum Creek
- Some multifamily buildings are partially vacant, redevelop or demo

### Urban Design

- Good proximity to downtown.
- Diverse housing stock, old homes, good layout of neighborhood. Few empty lots
- Take entire (east/west sides) Parsons corridor into consideration for urban design and land use
- Historic designation for homes/neighborhoods is not needed
- Gateway at Parsons and Livingston avenues is good, improvements have been made
- Gateway at Miller – Kelton needs improvement, redevelop commercial
- Sound wall may be built with construction of 70/71 split
- Gateways within the Near Southside should also be highlighted
- Eastern gateway at Livingston Avenue and Alum Creek on the north side needs to be cleaned up
- Gateways at Livingston, Kelton, Miller, Lockbourne, Champion, Ohio
- Gateway at Nelson and Livingston has crumbling railroad overpass
- Gateways at north and south end of Parsons Avenue
- Oakwood Avenue at Whittier Street vacant land needs to be cleaned up; people gather on lot with discarded furniture; used to have horseshoe pits
- Ganthers Place looks good
- Numerous dilapidated buildings need to be torn down
- Clean up Parsons Avenue so businesses will want to come; work with merchants on attractive window displays; repair sidewalks; get businesses engaged to help out
- Frebis looks fairly good
- Alum Creek has possibilities – could be shopping area

- Livingston and Champion:
  - southeast corner redevelop (Old Reeb's Restaurant) – could be community center for seniors and children with a party room – plenty of parking available
  - good potential to redevelop with Old Reeb's Restaurant space, long standing businesses in area, buildings with storefront windows
- Like that Livingston still has a lot of single family units on the corridor
- Old Livingston theatre building is special
- Old Oaks neighborhood is cherished, being submitted for possible National Historic Registry
- New homes should be 2-stories to fit in with the community
- New sidewalks, new ornamental street lighting, and brick pavers needed
- Old growth trees cherished
- 1930s – 1960s housing
- Bury power lines
- Use decorative lighting
- Create gateways to individual neighborhoods with pillars and plaques – fund this within public works projects (do not place signs at entrances use more attractive pillars)
- Overall the community rates a 6.5 in appearance: Miller 4/5, Kelton 5, Lilly 6, Livingston 5/6
- Usually buildings that are demolished are burn outs
- Overlay has too many restrictions, new businesses were looking to move to Parsons, location of parking and drive thrus made it prohibitive
- Progress is needed, some demolition of buildings may be needed
- Parsons won't be the Short North
- Need more available parking lots on Parsons
- Unattractive businesses at Livingston and Fairwood
- Seymour north of Livingston needs improvement
- Rhoads and Livingston and Fairwood and Livingston intersections have redevelopment potential
- Feeling of neglect and abandonment
- Narrow lots require variances to build a modern home

## **Economic Development**

- Increase homeownership
- Affordable housing stock
- Vacant and abandoned homes need to be addressed
- Doubles are liability for neighborhood, most accessible multifamily to purchase leads to landlords that don't maintain the property, widespread through area
- Difficult to redevelop doubles
- Absorption of vacant housing will take a long time, change will happen slowly. Reality is that some will be purchased over time, but what to do with the rest?
- Downturn of economy has slowed redevelopment trend – i.e. Old Oaks
- Redevelop small corner stores that don't contribute to the streetscape into a community amenity
- Need more of a cooperative spirit between the historic and non-historic designation neighborhoods
- Redevelopment of TechneGlas site will assist the area
- Opportunity to develop better relationship between community organizations and the business community
- Alum Creek industrial properties underutilized; should be more of a job center
- Need job education for the community
- Oakwood and Whittier the building is empty
- Loss of community grocery store, drug store, cleaners
- How can the city incent store owners to fix up their buildings?
- Intersection of Livingston and Fairwood avenues needs a stronger identity, strong anchor like Walgreens, ethnic shops, coffee shops
- Use Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds around Livingston, on Sycamore high vacancy
- Need to attract more young adult home buyers – ages 20-35 as an affordable alternative to more expensive cities
- New jobs at Nationwide Children's Hospital will not be for entry level – neighborhood will not be qualified as a whole
- Over the next 10 years most of planning area won't change much, northern portion by hospital has the greatest potential to change as jobs are added and employees locate in the neighborhood, the change will work its way south
- Parsons Avenue used to be the commercial corridor for the southside in the years past
- Parson corridor will be helped by a strong residential core
- Revitalize corridor and preserve diversity of community, bring together east and west sides of Parsons. Currently Parsons serves as "barrier" to communities to the east and west.

- Build off of Children's Hospital and make Parsons a family friendly destination
- Need realistic expectations on how redevelopment of corridors will take place – market realities. Plan should not hinder redevelopment
- Area is referred to as southside instead of south end due to community preference
- Younger folks have been moving in buying homes taking advantage of the great value for homes
- Redevelop Driving Park Circle for mixed or higher income
- Run plan draft by developers (Skilken)
- Redevelop at key corridors on Livingston: Miller, Kelton, Champion
- Develop mixed use by new CVS on Livingston
- Redevelop light industrial at Livingston and Rhoads (old Cookie Factory)

### **Transportation**

- Repave Parsons Avenue, Lockbourne Road repaving looks good
- Good location makes it possible to walk to many amenities
- Parsons Avenue is undergoing an engineering study for improvements. Currently turns on Parsons Avenue are limited creating cut through traffic on residential streets
- City promote an adopt an alley program to better maintain alleys
- The number of people cycling has increased; the planning area is disconnected from the Alum Creek bikeway, a better connection is needed at the southern portion of the planning area to serve both the Near Southside and the Southside – Alum Creek bikeway needs bike parking and trail head in this area
- Speeding problems on Linwood Avenue, traffic circles do not slow traffic, some people speed around them – are they the appropriate size?
- Deshler Park - Fairwood Avenue has no sidewalks so that children can walk safely on the west side of the thoroughfare, and handicapped people in motorized wheelchairs are forced to ride in the street against traffic, and street lighting is so dim that to see a person walking in the street at night you have to use your bright lights
- There is no side walk between Lockbourne Road and Lilly Avenue on the southside of Whittier street
- There is no sidewalk directly east or west on the southside of Whittier Street at the intersection and traffic light at Fairwood Avenue
- Upgrade streets like Eastmoor Boulevard
- Bicyclists are seen throughout the planning area, but it's unclear on the level of overall demand
- One-way streets should be eliminated
- Boulevards are cherished
- Good bus service coverage
- Keep the traffic pattern on Parsons Avenue as is, it's a main artery
- For future consideration – viable light rail down Livingston connecting to destinations like airport, downtown
- Current configuration of Parsons is the best, new alternatives do not improve the traffic flow

### **Other: Community Facilities, City Programs**

- Deshler Park is asset – add walking path, shelter house
- Libraries are important assets for the community
- Rebuild Maloney Health Clinic back on the same site (Schottenstein site area)
- City needs to better promote unsung heroes
- City needs to be more proactive in trying to assist the neighborhood; plan needs to be implemented
- More flexible work hours for code enforcement to enforce code beyond the normal work hours
- Martin Park on Kossuth Street should be expanded to include the vacant property to the south and the old manufacturing building to the west
- Apathy is pervasive, more community leaders are needed
- Water spray park for young people
- Fix up all the parks, important to maintain a vital neighborhood
- Create training center with computers to educate community leaders on computer skills and business skills
- Training center for cooking and sewing skills that would lead to jobs
- City needs to be proactive to form relationships – city offices located in the neighborhood should be involved with civic interaction and causes
- Pride of place needs to be demonstrated through clean streets and maintained curbs and sidewalks
- Cannot access the river for recreation or swimming because of a fence
- Need to increase the number of users of the multipurpose trail along Alum Creek to increase the safety
- Build community identity through parade (holiday parade), carnival, multicultural fest
- No parking available along the Alum Creek Bike Trail – need trailhead so people can drive to it with bikes. Livingston is not an attractive way to bike or walk to trail.
- Fixed up housing should receive a tax abatement
- Columbus schools are a major impediment to turning around the neighborhood

- Spray park and additional upgrades are planned for Livingston park funded by Nationwide Children's Hospital in the Master Plan (Rec & Parks)
- The City should consider acquisition of Deshler School property for parkland (Rec & Parks)
- Explore the use of a north-south Bike Boulevard (Rec & Parks)
- Explore the use of an on-street bike facility for Deshler Avenue (Rec & Parks)

The following individuals were interviewed as community stakeholders to gather background information:

Debera Diggs, Columbus South Side Area Commission Chair

Jim Griffin, Columbus South Side Area Commission

Connie Boykin, Columbus South Side Area Commission

Ned McNamara, Parsons Avenue Merchants Assoc. (PAMA) Chair

Angela Mingo, Nationwide Children's Hospital

Katie Radford, President Southside United Neighbors, President Southern Orchard Civic Association

Mike Aaron, Livingston Avenue Area Commission

Bryan Boatright, Livingston Avenue Area Commission

Jon Beard, Columbus Compact

John Edgar, Community Development For All People

George Tabit, Columbus Housing Partnership

Recreation & Parks staff